Game Day Kaimin, September 22, 2001

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Can UM's go-to senior receiver keep the Griz on top?

Etu's Back

MONTANA VS. West. Washington
What do you think?
"I FEEL LIKE IF YOU’RE DETERMINED ENOUGH, YOU CAN’T BE DENIED."

By Chad Dundas

Etu Molden can hear the fans chanting his name.

This is odd, because it’s only Wednesday and Washington Grizzly Stadium is quiet as a study lounge. But it’s hard to blame the guy. No other Griz player in recent memory has so excited fans that they spontaneously shout his name — over and over — before the ball is even put in play. Etu, for his part, eggs them on, bobbing and dancing and waving his arms. When Etu is finished, Montana kick returns may never be the same.

"I get into that especially," he says. "I heard them the first time, they all started saying ‘E-tu! E-tu!’ and I thought ‘Yeah, that’s right.’" Etu, of course, is more than just a kick-return specialist. He’s also an art major, the only one on the football team, currently dabbling in sculpture. Art, he says, is something he grew up with. His mother, Joyce, teaches arts and crafts in Sacramento, Calif., where Etu was born.

"I always used to look at the stuff she did," he says. "I was like ‘Wow, that’s pretty cool. You made that? Out of nothing? You made that?’" Etu’s current projects include a pair of decorative weapons of bronze as well as a porcelain pawn wearing a crown.

"Nobody expects to see a pawn wearing a crown," he says. "I just do things like that, things people just don’t expect. And other things just to have fun with."

While art is his major and football his passion, it appears that most of Etu’s time these days is spent looking after Doshia, a five-month-old Boxer pup with a golden coat and heartbreaking eyes. The pair looks to be inseparable and the lives of both suffered a minor crisis Wednesday when Doshia got herself stung while trying to eat a bumblebee.

"A trip to the vet for shots followed, but neither the standout wide receiver nor his dog missed football practice. Etu was back in pads at mid-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Etu Molden shakes off a defender while tucking away a pass against Idaho last year.

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Montana

2001 Record: 1-1, 0-0 Big Sky
2000 Record: 13-2 Overall, 8-0 Big Sky

Offense

Yohance Humphrey
Running Back
5-10, 195 senior from Eagle River, Alaska

A handful of years ago if you told GCKU our best player of 2001 would be coming back we would've felt full of joy off, but you can't deny that the Griz would be in a world of hurt were we to lose Yo this year. After leading the team in rushing as a sophomore last year. We know the Screaming Eagles of Georgia Southern wake up yo Saturday for the Vikings. You can't contain Yo (and frankly, we don't think they can) it could turn out to be a loooong day for the Vikings.

Defense

Vince Huntsberger
Strong Safety
5-11, 190 senior from Libby, Mont.

Here at GCKU we've written so many of these little blurbs about Vince Huntsberger that we're starting to wonder what's left to say, it seems like Vince, finally to his senior campaign, has been playing like a schooled veteran for years. Vince leads the team's relatively young Montana O with 16 tackles, 12 of those solo. He also scored Montana's first touchdown of the season, picking up a Cal Poly fumble in the opener and rumbling 152 yard to set the Grizzly to Hawaii. Yo's not looking back, piling on, hoping to see all-time GCKU rushing record that one day we'll be able to challenge. This week against the Vikings he'll face a defensive line that averages only 290 pounds. We've seen Yo run through guys like that. We can all hope that size. If the WRs can't contain Yo (and frankly, we don't think they can) it could turn out to be a looong day for the Vikings.

NUMERICAL ROSTER

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Zikmund 81

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Dylan MacFarland 72

Thatcher Szalay 73

Brian Paic 66

G 62

T 77

Trey Young 3

Jonny Peeples 27

Andy Thompson 6

Ciche Pitcher 37

Curt Collins 90

Jonny Varona 55

Herbert Fernandez 97

Calvin Coleman 13
No word yet if Greg is ready to come, but the senior receiver leads the Vikings in catches in every game this season. He averages 24.6 yards per catch. The Monrow offense has a connection with the run and if the Vikings are to have good showing against the Griz, 23-60, Giralmo’s return could be a factor for the game. The senior from Tri Cities handles being on the (sort of) big stage.

We at GDK have never been to Maple Valley, Wash., but it sounds like a happy place where flowers grow beside a bubbling brook. But maybe it’s not, since it’s home to defender as nasty as Erik Totten. The senior leads the Viking in tackles with 18 and is also Western Washington’s punt returner. Last week he became WWU’s career punt return yardage leader and is averaging 12.9 yards on punt returns and 26.0 yards on kickoff returns. Given Montana’s early season troubles with punting, it’s not totally out of the question that Totten’s returns could be a factor in the game.
Around the Sky:

‘Cats miss out on big money as Oregon State drops MSU for Northern Arizona

Ian Costello

The Montana State Bobcats may have lost the chance to shock the sports world. They most certainly lost a lot of money.

In its third game of the year, the MSU was supposed to play the Division I-A power Oregon State Beavers. After losing to Alabama-Birmingham in their opener and defeating Weber State two weeks ago, the ‘Cats looked to be on a roll headed into Oregon.

Oregon State, which had already fallen to then unheralded Fresno State, was looking to rebound against the ‘Cats. The Beav’s poor performances against Fresno State and New Mexico State (a 27-22 win) and the Bobcats’ smacking of Weber forced one GameDay Editor to proclaim, “The world will know the ‘Cats are for real when they beat Oregon State.”

Montana State beating Oregon State was unlikely two weeks ago, now even playing them has been completely abandoned.

After terrorist attacks last week forced postponement of almost all college football games, Oregon State chose to drop their game with Montana State and schedule a Nov. 17 game with Northern Arizona. Both NAU and OSU had that date open while Montana State is scheduled to play Montana.

The decision to drop MSU and add NAU was made quickly for Oregon State, who could not wait to see if Division I-AA would extend the season a week to make up for the postponements.

“The events of the last few days have forced us to change our plans for this season,” OSU athletics director Mitch Barnhart said in a press release. “In an effort to ensure the viability of our football schedule and our program as a whole, it was important to make the schedule adjustments as quickly as possible.”

While NAU added a game and OSU found a opponent, Montana State was left holding an empty bag. The oft-in-debt athletics department at MSU that stood to gain $200,000 by playing the Beavers now must find another source of income to help alleviate their $800,000 debt.

The poor Bobcats can’t seem to get a break on or off the field. Maybe one will come this weekend when they try to extend their winning streak to two games as they host Cal Poly.

The world will know the Bobcats are for real when they beat this NAU team.

Northern Arizona

Southern Utah likes to play Big Sky teams. In 1998 they used a balanced option attack to shock the Grizzlies at home 45-35. Last year they won at Northern Arizona 27-23. This year they have already beaten Weber State, 28-21.

Now, looking for revenge, NAU must go to Cedar City, Utah to take on the Division II giant-killers.

Averaging an impressive 218.5 yards per game, NAU running back Marcus King is currently leading the Big Sky in all-purpose yardage and is third in the nation in the same category. With his habit of racking up yardage, King has moved into second place on the NAU career rushing list.

If the game remains a defensive struggle, look for NAU to throw. The ‘Jacks are allowing only 46 yards per game on the ground, good enough for seventh in the nation.

Idaho State vs. Sac State

Last season the Idaho State Bengals built a 21-point lead over Sacramento State but had to hold off a late Hornet rally to escape with a two-point victory.

Idaho State has yet to play a complete game this season. Before their meeting with Eastern Washington last week was postponed, the Bengals beat Montana Tech 49-7 in a game that was called with 12:53 remaining due to a power outage.

Idaho State can score a lot of points and sadly for the Sacramento State Hornets, they can’t seem to stop anybody. With their 1-1 record, the Hornets are dead last in the Big Sky Conference in scoring defense and total, allowing a dishheartening 30.5 points per game while giving up 482 total yards per contest.

Even worse news for Sacramento State is that they are an unremarkable 0-5 in offensive yardage, passing for 373 yards per game and averaging 482 yards per contest.

MSU vs. Portland State

In one of the biggest defensive struggles in the country this week, the No.17 Portland State Vikings will play host to No. 15 Grambling State.

This will be the first trip to play against a Big Sky Conference opponent for Grambling State head coach Doug Williams who led the Washington Redskins to victory over the Denver Broncos in Super Bowl XX.

Eastern Washington vs. Weber State

If you happen to be a fan of spread out, 60 yards through the air, listen up to the wide four on fourth and one classic Big Sky offense, look no further than the Eastern Washington Eagles.

Currently the Eagles are leading the nation in both passing offense and total offense, averaging 384 yards per game though the air and 539 yards per game total. Calling the shots for the explosive EWU offense is quarterback Fred Salanos who averages passing for 373 yards per game.

All these impressive offensive numbers look even more impressive when compared to the defense of conference bottom-dweller Weber State who the Eagles face this weekend.

Weber State will be trying to end a two-game losing streak to Eastern but things don’t look good when they are facing the second-worst total defense team in the Big Sky and rank at or near the bottom of 12 of the 26 total Big Sky Team statistical categories.

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Streaking Vikings hope to surprise No. 2 Montana

Carl Hennell
GameDay Kaomin

Western Washington University may be a Division II team, but having outscored their last two opponents 121-10, they're itching for an NCAA I-AA powerhouse to underestimate them.

"We're excited about playing," said Grizzly coach Joe Glenn, who compiled a 98-35 record at Div. II Northern Colorado before leading the Griz to a 1-3-2 campaign and a trip to the I-AA national championship last year. "It doesn't matter who we're playing. It's just good to get back on the field."

The Griz (1-1) return 16 starters from last year's Great Northwest Conference championship and they're riding high, averaging 50 points and 483 yards per game after pillaging University of Montana-Western last Saturday, 77-0.

"It's a good receiver," said Glenn. "Hopefully he isn't as fast as the Hawaii receivers.

The Vikings are bringing a rush defense that ranked 14th in the nation last year to try and tie-up UM's all-time leading rusher Yohanek Humphrey, who has piled up 292 rushing yards in two games this year.

The last time the Grizzlies faced a Div. II team was Sept. 4, 1999. They beat South Dakota 45-13.

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Montana vs. Western Washington

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Montana vs. Western Washington 7
Sculpting History

"I GET INTO THAT ESPECIALLY. I HEARD THEM THE FIRST TIME, THEY ALL STARTED SAYING 'E-TU! E-TU!,' AND I THOUGHT 'YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT.'"

Etu Molden gives freshmen receivers an earful at practice.

Continued from Page 3

week after sitting out Tuesday’s practice nursing a groin injury. Doshia waited close by, leashed to a thick silver chain and a black leather collar studded with half-inch spikes.

Etu says he's just happy that Montana is giving him the opportunity to touch the ball. Recruited as a safety, he spent his first two seasons at UM on defense.

"I just complained, man," Etu says of his efforts to convince coaches he should be a receiver. "I played both ways in high school. I was playing safety (here) but in my heart of hearts I just didn't feel like that was my position. I stole a couple of playbooks and copied down the plays and I was trying to prove to the coaches that I knew it."

Griz coaches eventually gave in, letting both Etu and his freshman roommate, Yo Humphrey, move away from the defensive backfield. It turned out to be a pretty good idea. They became two of Montana's prime offensive weapons.

Etu says playing receiver is all he's ever wanted to do.

"Ever since I can remember, when I was a little kid I was like 'Man, I want to be like Jerry Rice," Etu says. "I want to go out there and catch passes and score touchdowns."

So far, Etu's career at Montana has been punctuated by a few memorable moments. The game-winning catch in double overtime to beat Sac State in '99. Leaping over a Georgia Southern corner back to score Montana's first touchdown in last year's national championship game. Later in the same game, rolling out and firing a pass downfield that barely eluded Jimmy Farris' outstretched fingers. And of course those kickoff returns.

But he knows he's yet to establish himself as a premier UM receiver. Etu hasn't made the short list of Grizzly greats — a list that includes names like Wells, Douglass and Farris.

"I feel like I definitely have all the tools to get there," he says. As one of two seniors on the Grizzly receiving corps this year, Etu says he's made a conscious effort to mold himself into a leader. Off the field he's light-hearted, laid back. But when it's time to suit-up, the easy-going, gap-toothed smile disappears.

"When I hit the field it's totally different, it's all business," he says. "When it comes to the game you've got to flip that switch in order to compete or else I feel you put yourself at jeopardy out there. It's a dangerous game."

Etu says he'll take this season week by week and at the end he fully expects to have left his mark on UM's football program. He's interested in pursuing professional football after he gets his art degree this spring.

"I feel like if you're determined enough, you can't be denied," he says.

Etu's place in Grizzly history won't be clear until the end of the season. One thing is certain. Saturday, when UM lines up to receive its first kickoff, the fans will be chanting his name.